

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

301 State House
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6699

BILL NUMBER: SB 273

DATE PREPARED: Jan 14, 2002

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: High School Diplomas for Certain Veterans.

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FUNDS AFFECTED: X **GENERAL**
DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill establishes the High School Diploma Program (VHSDP) for eligible veterans. The bill provides that certain veterans who because of military service left a public or nonpublic high school without graduating in order to perform military service may receive a high school diploma. The bill also provides that a spouse or other relative may apply to have a diploma issued to a deceased veteran. It allows a choice between a diploma issued by the State Board of Education (the Board) or a diploma from the school corporation (or its successor) where the veteran attended high school. The bill provides for program administration by the Department of Education (IDOE) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

Effective Date: July 1, 2002.

Explanation of State Expenditures: (Revised) The IDOE and the DVA would incur an indeterminable increase in administrative expenses in accordance with the provisions of this bill.

DVA: The DVA would be required to develop and process an indeterminable number of applications of eligible World War I, World War II, Korean, and Vietnam veterans seeking high school diplomas. Development of informative materials and application forms would increase expenditures for the DVA. The DVA would also be required to verify the information provided by a veteran or the veteran's surviving family members. Once verification is completed, the DVA would be required to forward the verified application to the IDOE.

Background: There are currently 91 county service officers (CSOs) that serve the needs of veterans requesting information (Marion County has its own service officers). CSOs are trained and must pass annual certification in order to maintain their position. Although CSOs report to the county council and county commissioners, the DVA serves as the training agency and also supervision authority of CSOs. CSOs may process and fill out claims paperwork, free of charge, including searches for discharge form DD-214 for a

veteran. However, a CSO is prevented by law to file completed paperwork. This role is reserved for veteran's service organizations. CSOs are funded from county or city funds. It is possible the DVA could utilize CSOs to carry out the verification process of applications for a VHSDP diploma.

As of November 1, 2001, the DVA had 13 full-time staff members and three vacancies. Two of the vacancies were in the DVA-operated Veteran's Memorial Cemetery. The remaining vacancy was a COMOT4 position within the administrative section of the DVA.

IDOE: The IDOE would be required to design and, if requested by the veteran, distribute the VHSDP diplomas. The impact of this proposal most likely would not be absorbable within the IDOE's existing budget. Additionally, the DVA may consult with the IDOE to verify information on an application for a VHSDP diploma. Although the additional expenditure required would be temporary, the IDOE reports additional staff would be required to carry out verifications of applications under the bill. The Department could employ temporary staff to verify applicant information. If diplomas awarded were required to have the State Seal attached, the IDOE would incur additional printing and postage cost.

Additionally, the IDOE would be required to either direct the school corporation that the diploma recipient attended (if still in existence) to present the VHSDP diploma or IDOE would present the diploma. The expense of presentation of a VHSDP diploma by the IDOE should be minimal if conducted during scheduled business meetings of the Board.

Since relatives of deceased veterans would be eligible to apply for VHSDP diplomas to be awarded posthumously, it is possible more diplomas could be applied for than the estimated number of living Indiana World War I, World War II, Korean, and Vietnam veterans. However, the specific number of Indiana World War I, World War II, Korean, and Vietnam veterans who interrupted their high school studies to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States is currently indeterminable. Additionally, the number of Indiana veterans of the above listed conflicts that were honorably discharged is currently unknown.

Background: The Indiana War Memorials Commission reports that approximately 130,400 Hoosiers served in World War I. Approximately, 400,000 Hoosiers served in World War II. The actual number of Hoosiers that served in Korea and Vietnam is currently indeterminable. However, the following number of killed in action (KIA) Hoosiers are as follows: World War I - 3,350; World War II - 13,000; Korea - 880 to 920 (approximately); Vietnam - 1,490 to 1,570 (approximately.)

It is estimated that approximately 330,067 World War I, World War II, Korean, and Vietnam veterans live in Indiana today. Roughly 50% of this total served in the Vietnam Conflict.

Explanation of State Revenues: Neither the IDOE nor the DVA would be allowed to charge a fee to process an application or to present a VHSDP diploma.

Explanation of Local Expenditures: If county service officers (CSOs) are utilized to carry out the verification process of veteran diploma applications under the bill, counties with CSOs could see their staff members' responsibilities increase, which could result in less resources available to carry out the other administrative duties by CSOs.

If school corporations elect to hold a ceremony to present a VHSDP diploma, the school corporation could incorporate the awarding of such diploma at the same time the corporation holds ceremonies for the graduating class of the school year.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: Department of Education; Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Local Agencies Affected: School Corporations.

Information Sources: William Jackson, Jon Brinkley, Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs, (317) 232-3919; Steve Meskin, Office of the Actuary, Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, (202) 273-5062; Terry Spradlin, Indiana Department of Education, (317) 232-6671; Dave Buchanan, Indiana War Memorials Commission, (317) 232-7616.